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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9427
INFO RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0036
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UNCLAS DHAKA 000879

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INSB, SCA/FO, AND IO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL UNGA KPKO BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH'S PRIME MINISTER ACCEPTS INVITATION TO MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OBAMA ON PEACEKEEPING DURING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REF: STATE 91632

Summary

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¶1. (SBU) Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed informed the Ambassador September 9 that she looked forward to meeting with President Obama and other Heads of State during the UNGA to discuss peacekeeping reform. Hasina said she had recently discussed peacekeeping reform with the UNSYG on the margins of the Geneva climate change conference and looked forward to sharing Bangladesh's views with the President and leaders of other major troop contributors. We can expect Bangladesh to ask for a greater role in planning peacekeeping operations and for representation in relevant UNPKO bodies. In addition, Bangladesh wants to expand its peacekeeping training center, established with support from the USG.

PM Adjusts Schedule to Attend Peacekeeping Summit Meeting

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¶2. (SBU) On September 9, the Ambassador and visiting SCA A/DAS Owen met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed and delivered reftel invitation from the President for the UNGA summit meeting on Peacekeeping on September 23. Hasina told the Ambassador she looked forward to participating in this "very important meeting." The PM added that she had talked about peacekeeping reform when she had met with the UNSYG in Geneva on the margins of a climate change conference. (Note: We received reftel while the PM was in Geneva and immediately notified her staff, who scrambled to adjust her travel to allow her to participate in the meeting. This was complicated by her desire to spend at least part of eid ul fitr in Bangladesh, currently anticipated for September 20 - 22.)

Bangladesh to Push for Greater Role In Peacekeeping Planning

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¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador expressed appreciation for Bangladesh's contributions to peacekeeping and stressed the President's desire to engage in a dialogue regarding reform.

Hasina said Bangladesh was eager to contribute to the discussion in New York and told the Ambassador she would propose expanding Bangladesh's peacekeeping training institute (established with USG support). One of Hasina's aides noted that Bangladesh would look for a greater role in planning peacekeeping operations, including through participation in the UN's Peace Building Commission. The aide also stressed the importance of Bangladeshi representation in senior level PKO positions.

Comment

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¶4. (SBU) The Prime Minister and her senior advisers understand that the President's invitation has presented them with a unique opportunity to influence the debate on peacekeeping reform. Our contacts throughout the civilian and military bureaucracy tell us they are working on recommendations for Hasina to present in New York. In the context of the bilateral relationship, the timing of this meeting is ideal. It will provide us an opportunity to build on the momentum from the Foreign Minister's September 16 meeting with Secretary Clinton in Washington. It will also allow us to reinforce the opportunities for Bangladesh to play a leadership role in the region and beyond in a field where the country has a great deal to contribute.

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